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NOTES ON GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION.

BY

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THE SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY.—One of the most important events of recent years in geographical education is the establishment of the new School of Geography at Oxford University, under the control of a committee consisting of the Vice-Chancellor *ex officio*, and of four members of the University and three members of the Council of the Royal Geographical Society. For some years Mr. Yule Oldham has been Reader at Cambridge and Mr. H. J. Mackinder Reader at Oxford. Thus the steps were laid that led up to this most recent important action, that shows so clearly the recognition that geography is receiving as an important element in the education of business men and public men, as well as in that of travellers and scientists.

The School, under the charge of Mr. Mackinder, who will continue as Reader, will be supported by the University and the Royal Geographical Society, each agreeing to pay £ 400 a year. In addition to the Reader, who will devote his attention largely to Historical Geography, there will be a staff of three others. Dr. Andrew J. Herbertson, Assistant to the Reader, will lecture on Physical Geography and teach Cartography and Surveying. Mr. H. C. Dickson will lecture on certain branches of Physical Geography, and for the coming year Mr. G. B. Grundy will lecture on Ancient Geography.

During the Michaelmas Term Mr. Mackinder will lecture on the Historical Geography of the British Isles; Mr. Dickson on the Climate of the British Isles; Dr. Herbertson on the Geomorphology of Europe; and Mr. Grundy on the General Historical Topography of Greece. In addition, Dr. Herbertson will give instruction in cartography and practical geography, devoting attention particularly to map projections and to physical maps.

The work of the School will include a course of systematic instruction, primarily intended for graduates and other advanced students, with demonstrations and practical work in physical geography, cartography, and surveying. Courses of lectures will also be given with special reference to the historical and scientific teaching in the University.

Sir Clements Markham, in his Annual Address to the Royal Geographical Society, emphasizes the great importance of the step and speaks as follows in reference to the practical value of the School:

We look forward to our public schools being leavened by a new generation of masters well instructed in the principles of geography, and to new generations of public men whose geographical education will not have been neglected. The great success of our efforts to prepare travellers for the work of exploring justifies our expectation that, when the means of learning are once supplied at Oxford, there will be no lack of desire to avail themselves of it, not only among students in the University itself, but throughout the country. For I wish it to be understood that all students will be welcomed at the School of Geography, whether attached to the University or not. It will be the only institution of its kind in the kingdom.

The School should be more than successful, and its establishment should be an added illustration of the importance of University Geography Courses. With the opportunities now offered at Brussels and at Oxford, geography has received a recognition as a University subject that ought to be a lesson to this country, especially to the authorities of our many large universities that have no chairs in this science.

THE INFLUENCE OF UNIVERSITIES ON GEOGRAPHY TEACHING IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.—Prof. W. M. Davis, of Harvard University, and many others interested in the cause of geography teaching in the United States, have for some time maintained that better geography work in the secondary schools depended upon the development of university courses in geography, and that when the secondary school work was thus enlivened and enriched, more profitable elementary school work would follow at once.

Further, it is believed that the continuity of work made possible by a progressive course of study from elementary school to graduate work in the university could not but help to strengthen the work all along the line. The increasing numbers of college and university courses in geography are already bringing forth fruit, as anticipated.

That the result to be expected may be very great is shown by the experience of other countries where university geography work has long been well developed, as is well illustrated by the report recently made by Joan Berenice Reynolds, of Cardiff, Wales, concerning the teaching of geography in Switzerland and North Italy.*

* "The Teaching of Geography in Switzerland and North Italy," London, Clay & Sons; New York, The Macmillan Company, 1899.

In a summary of the conditions in Switzerland* the author quotes as follows:

"The schools are rich in apparatus of all descriptions, and most of those I visited had a museum of objects, bought by the government for use in teaching. These objects included large collections of stuffed animals, birds and fishes, shells, pressed flowers, specimens of timber, varieties of rock and fossils, raw and industrial productions in all stages of manufacture, besides series of pictures, photographs and lantern-slides.

I think the great reason why the cantonal governments are so ready thus to encourage the teaching of geography is because it is a subject taught in many schools by a trained specialist, and one in which it is possible for pupils to take degrees when they enter the University. The University where geography receives most attention in Switzerland is that of Bern, where it has been recognized for fifteen years. A three years' course is necessary to obtain the Ph.D. degree, and the candidate is examined in three subjects, one of which is a special subject. The candidate who takes geography as his special subject writes a dissertation, over which a year or more may be taken, but which must bear the stamp of original research in some direction. If the treatise is accepted, the candidate undergoes a written examination, consisting of three papers, each taking three hours, and finally an oral examination lasting two hours. Geography can also be taken as the chief subject for the Ph.D. at the Zurich and Freiburg Universities. At Lausanne and Geneva Universities there are chairs for physical geography, and this subject is studied by candidates for the Licentiate for Natural and Physical Sciences and the Baccalaureat of Physical and Chemical Sciences respectively.

The fact that geography forms an optional branch of these highest university examinations has caused public opinion to regard it as a far more important study than is at present the case here. It is this attitude of public sympathy with the subject which impressed me more than any particular method in vogue in teaching it."

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AS A COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENT.—The discussion of college entrance requirements within the last few years has tended toward increasing the possible credit to be given for satisfactory science work in the secondary schools. Harvard University has already increased the options in science, and has placed Physiography upon the list of possibilities.

The recent report of the Committee on College Entrance Requirements of the National Educational Association recommends that physical geography, botany, zoology, physics, and chemistry be all recognized (counting one unit each) for college entrance.

The Committee further recommends that physical geography be pursued for not less than four periods weekly, through the first year of the high school course; that the course should contain a large amount of laboratory work, to which the lectures and discussions should be related; and that "note-books should not be an

* The Teaching of Geography in Switzerland, *Journal of School Geography*, December, 1899, Vol. III, pp. 383-389.

end in themselves; they should be kept in such a way as to emphasize the spirit and method of scientific work."

The Committee defines Physical Geography as "the physical environment of man," and adds "that its principal themes are the earth as a globe, the atmosphere, the ocean, and the lands, all appropriately limited in scope and difficulty by the time at the disposal of the course and the capacity of the pupils."

The ground here covered is the same as that outlined in Harvard requirements under the head of Physiography. It should be noted, however, that the presence of Meteorology as an optional subject in the Harvard list necessarily reduces the attention to be given to the phenomena of the atmosphere in the course in Physiography. Further, the course outlined in Physiography in the Harvard circular is intended for more advanced secondary pupils than is the course suggested by the Committee of the National Educational Association.

An appendix to the report gives in full the recommendations of the sub-committee on Physical Geography, of which Professor Albert P. Brigham, of Colgate University, was chairman.

This special report goes into detail concerning Laboratory exercises, equipment, etc., available for secondary school work, and contains a valuable series of suggestions for teachers.

The report as a whole may be obtained for a small sum from the Secretary of the National Educational Association, Winona, Minn.

The special report of the sub-committee on Physical Geography was published in a preliminary way in the *Journal of School Geography*, for September, 1898.

POPULAR INTEREST IN GEOGRAPHY.—It is interesting and pleasing to note the rising interest in geography teaching of all grades, especially as evidenced by more numerous and larger college classes, by the willingness of Normal School authorities to give the subject better attention and more time in the curriculum, and by the desire of the teachers in elementary schools to pursue special courses in the subject.

The present development of commercial courses in high schools—soon to be followed, it is hoped, by University courses—is also significant as showing the increased need there will soon be for good geography teachers in secondary schools and in colleges. Commercial geography is an essential in every commercial course; but the teachers of geography who are prepared to give courses in commercial geography are unfortunately few.

It is also encouraging to find that the interest in better geography work is not confined to any one centre or series of centres in the United States, though it is readily seen that the present geographical conditions in the educational field are almost wholly due to the influence extended by a few Universities.

The latest announcement of an awakening to the needs of better geography teachers of all grades comes from South Carolina, where efficient work is being done at the Winthrop Normal and Industrial College, Rock Hill, by Cleveland Abbe, Jr., Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins), and at South Carolina College, Columbia, by L. C. Glenn, Ph.D. (Johns Hopkins). It is hoped that the efforts thus being put forth, under favorable conditions, may soon bear fruit in better teaching throughout the State.